

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**LOCATING, TRACKING AND ELIMINATING GLOBAL TERRORISTS:  
WHY U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (USSOCOM) IS BEST  
EQUIPPED TO SERVE AS THE SUPPORTED COMBATANT COMMAND  
FOR THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM (GWOT)**

by

Colonel James P. Ludowese  
United States Army

Doctor Sherifa Zuhur  
Project Adviser

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

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U.S. Army War College  
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE <b>15 MAR 2006</b>		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>Locating, Tracking, and Eliminating Global Terrorists Why U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Is Best Equipped to Serve as the Supported Combatant Command for the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT)</b>				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) <b>James Ludowese</b>				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5050</b>				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT <b>See attached.</b>					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>34</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			

## **ABSTRACT**

**AUTHOR:** Colonel James P. Ludowese

**TITLE:** Locating, Tracking and Eliminating Global Terrorists: Why U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) is Best Prepared to Serve as the Supported Combatant Command in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

**FORMAT:** Strategy Research Project

**DATE:** 01 March 2006      **WORD COUNT:** 10,203      **PAGES:** 33

**KEY TERMS:** Al Qaeda, Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI), Trans Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI), Anti-terrorism (AT).

**CLASSIFICATION:** Unclassified

The SRP will investigate, and address, the numerous challenges that must be resolved (diplomatic, interagency, legal, and militarily) when terrorists cross GCC AOR boundaries. This SRP will be a comparative analysis of the capabilities and limitations of the current GCCs in order to determine which organization within the Department of Defense is optimally designed and prepared to address this aspect of the GWOT. Ultimately the SRP will answer the question: Should USSOCOM be designated by the Secretary of Defense as the supported commander for locating, tracking and eliminating transient international terrorist threats.



LOCATING, TRACKING AND ELIMINATING GLOBAL TERRORISTS: WHY U.S.  
SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (USUSSOCOM) IS BEST EQUIPPED TO  
SERVE AS THE SUPPORTED COMBATANT COMMAND FOR THE GLOBAL WAR  
ON TERRORISM (GWOT).

There is no doubt that the events of 2001 have forever altered the way the United States and the world approach the threat of international terrorist organizations. On September 11, 2001 nineteen radical jihadists succeeded in doing what many thought was impossible - killing more than 3,000 civilian and military personnel in a series of well-executed surprise attacks within the borders of the United States targeting what Osama bin Laden called "America's icons of military and economic power."<sup>1</sup> How Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (the mastermind of the "Planes Operation")<sup>2</sup>, as well as the nineteen hijackers were able to plan and execute these attacks has been the subject of countless books and magazine articles, as well as the comprehensive 20-month investigation by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. The results of these documents, including the *9/11 Commission Report*, show that the catastrophic events of 9/11 could be contributed to a combination of: detailed planning and execution by inherently evil people; systemic and organizational flaws in our national security system; and to a much lesser degree, some luck on the part of al Qaeda. While it is true that the senior leadership within al Qaeda anticipated that they would be successful in executing the attacks of 9/11, the level of destruction and death which resulted from the attacks surprised even Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden is quoted as saying, "I was the most optimistic of all, but the results exceeded all we had hoped for."<sup>3</sup>

While I do not discount the findings of any of the formal or informal investigations into the attacks of 9/11, I also believe the case can, and should, be made that some of our own national strategies, policies, plans, structures and infrastructure may have unwittingly assisted al Qaeda in achieving such a high degree of success during these operations. By conducting a detailed mission analysis, coupled with meticulous planning, and numerous rehearsals conducted over several years, al Qaeda was able to identify, and ultimately exploit, weaknesses in our national security systems. While many of the weaknesses that al Qaeda was able to exploit in 2001 were identified by the 9/11 Commission (and have subsequently been corrected), I believe there are still weaknesses in our national security system, which unless properly addressed and corrected, may provide al Qaeda or other transnational terrorist organizations an opportunity to attack the United States in the future.

This paper will address some of the inherent lines of fissure within our current methodology when we attempt to locate, track and eliminate transnational terrorists, specifically

those who travel from one geographic combatant command (GCC) area of responsibility (AOR) to another. This paper assumes that a military response to a transnational terrorist threat located outside the United States has been directed by either the President of the United States (POTUS) or the Secretary of Defense (SecDef). This paper will identify the 21<sup>st</sup> Century threats; define "success" in the global war on terrorism (GWOT); suggest ways to prevent the regeneration of transnational terrorist organizations; verify the current joint doctrinal framework for establishing duties and responsibilities for the unified combatant commands; and provide a comparative analysis of the capabilities and limitations of four of the five geographic combatant commands (GCCs)<sup>4</sup>, as well as U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). It will conclude with recommended modifications to the *United States National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, the *Unified Command Plan* (UCP), the *Unified Action Armed Forces* (UNAAF), and U.S. foreign policy in order to more effectively deal with the current and emerging threat posed by transnational terrorist organizations.

### 21<sup>st</sup> Century Threats to the United States

Prior to any meaningful analysis of how successful the United States and its allies have been during the GWOT, it is necessary to clearly identify the current focus of the GWOT, as well as the 21st Century threat. The threats to the United States in the GWOT are primarily from: radical extremist transnational groups, state sponsors of terrorism, and other non-state actors who may, or may not, be affiliated with transnational terrorist groups. While the preponderance of organizations identified by the United States as being foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) are also defined as being radical Islamic jihadists, the remainder of the international terrorist organizations are aligned along other ideological, as well as non-ideological, lines. President George W. Bush clearly understands the complexity of the GWOT, and the fact that there are numerous ideologically-based organizations which must be addressed now and for the foreseeable future. During his address to a joint session of Congress and the American people on 20 September 2001, President Bush articulated the scope of the GWOT when he said: "Our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated."<sup>5</sup>

In his book *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global*, Fawaz Gerges states that a common error, which has been prevalent in the minds of many Westerners since September 2001, is to lump all terrorists organizations into one all-encompassing group – al Qaeda. As Gerges accurately points out, not only does this approach obscure many of the critical factors that differentiate the various terrorist organizations, it also plays right into "what bin Laden, Zawahiri

and their associates want us to believe – that they (al Qaeda) represent the entire jihadist movement, which is simply not true.”<sup>6</sup> The religious and political motivations of the various terrorist groups are not only important to acknowledge, but more importantly to understand, as it is this type of information which will be critical when we try to develop and implement a national strategy to locate, track and destroy these terrorist organizations.

While currently there are assessed to be up to 40 different insurgent and/or terrorist organizations operating within Iraq since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), the U.S. Department of State (DOS) officially identifies 42 organizations on their current list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs).<sup>7</sup> In their annual *Patterns of Global Terrorism* the DOS describes in detail the following legal criteria that must be met in order for an organization to qualify as a FTO: they must be a foreign organization that engages in terrorist activity, and that activity must threaten the security of the United States.<sup>8</sup> By their ideological goals, organizational structure, and modus operandi, the majority of these 42 groups also meet the screening criteria to be designated “transnational terrorist organizations.” While the majority of the organizations identified by DOS as being FTOs possess varying degrees of ability to project their terror on a global scale, some of the organizations primarily pose a threat to a specific country or region, and have not threatened the United States directly. While these regional- or country-specific terrorist groups are still extremely dangerous to our allies, and possibly threaten overall regional stability, they do not pose the same threat as al Qaeda with its demonstrated ability and stated objectives to strike targets within the United States.

This paper will focus on those groups that formed an alliance known as “The World Islamic Front for the Jihad against Jews and Crusaders (al-Jabhah al-Islamiyyah al- ‘Alamiyyah Li-Qital al-Yahud Wal-Salibiyyin).” This alliance, formed in February 1998, brought together the most radical jihadist organizations who have repeatedly stated, “It is the duty of all Muslims to kill U.S. citizens and their allies.”<sup>9</sup> The organizations which signed the pact with Osama bin Laden to form The World Islamic Jihad Front include: Egyptian Islamic Jihad (Zawahiri faction), Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya, Bay’at el-Imam, and the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh.<sup>10</sup> Today, Al Qaeda has evolved into a much more diverse organization that includes terrorist organizations currently estimated to be operating in up to 60 countries. In addition to the original signatories to the World Islamic Jihad Front organizations the following organizations are assessed to be affiliated with al Qaeda: The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, Islamic Army of Aden (Yemen), al Qaida Fi Bilad al-Rifudayn (Iraq), Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad (Kashmir), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) (Algeria), Abu

Sayyaf Group (ASG) (Malaysia, Philippines), the Jemaah Islamiya (JI) (Southeast Asia), and some experts believe the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) (Philippines).<sup>11</sup>

State sponsorship of terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to our national security. In his State of the Union address in January 2002, President Bush identified Iran, Iraq and North Korea as being members of the "axis of evil ...arming to threaten the peace of the world."<sup>12</sup> In addition to these three countries, the DOS also lists Cuba, Libya, Sudan, and Syria as being state sponsors of terrorism.<sup>13</sup> For years the DOS list of state sponsors of terrorism had included Iraq. However, in 2003 Iraq was taken off of the list of sponsors of terror after the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime. In their 2003 version of the *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, the DOS stated Cuba, Libya, Sudan and Syria "did not take all of the necessary actions to disassociate themselves fully from their terrorism ties in 2002. While some of these countries have taken steps to cooperate in the global war on terrorism, most have also continued the very actions that led them to be declared state sponsors."<sup>14</sup>

Recently the cooperation of these DOS-designated state sponsors of terrorism has improved with the United States, as well as the United Nations, with the notable exceptions of North Korea and Iran. The DOS provides numerous examples of the continuing pattern of non-cooperation by North Korea with the United Nations (despite signing the UN Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, and the Convention Against Taking Hostages), as well as with the United State's proposals for freezing assets of potential terrorist organizations.<sup>15</sup> While Iran has not been as active in sponsoring terrorists as it was during the period of 1980's, according to the State Department's annual *Patterns of Global Terrorism*: "Iran remains the most active state sponsor of terrorism in the world. Its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (ISRC) and Ministry of Intelligence and Security were involved in the planning of, and support of, terrorist acts and continued to exhort a variety of groups that use terrorism to pursue their goals."<sup>16</sup>

The Iranian government also continues to be deeply involved in anti-Israeli activity as well. In August of 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini established al-Quds Day (a pro-Palestinian event which over the years has often included anti-Israeli demonstrations) saying, "I have been notifying the Muslims of the danger posed by the usurper Israel." Since that time supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, former President Seyed Mohammad Khatami, the Assembly of Experts, and most recently President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad have continued to inflame anti-Israeli sentiment within Iran.<sup>17</sup> Iran provided financing, terrorist training and military equipment to numerous anti-Israeli organizations operating outside of Iran including Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Hamas, and Ahmad Jabril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Iran is also



believed to have numerous al Qaeda operatives and leaders within its borders. Robert Windrem, an investigative producer for the National Broadcast Company (NBC), states the number of al Qaeda operatives currently located within Iran is between "20-25 individuals."<sup>18</sup> While the actual number of al Qaeda operatives located within Iran is open for debate, there is little doubt that an unknown number of al Qaeda personnel are there. So far the United States has been unable to convince the Iranian government to provide a list of the "al Qaeda operatives" that the Iranian government admits to having under some form of detention or house arrest by its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. However, it is widely believed by regional intelligence agencies (including Saudi Arabia) that some key al Qaeda senior leaders may be hiding in Iran including two sons of Osama bin Laden, Saad and Hamza bin Laden. Other al Qaeda senior leaders suspected of possibly being in Iran are: Suleiman Abu Ghaith (a bin Laden spokesman and an individual that Iran offered to extradite to Kuwait), Shaikh Said (al Qaeda's chief financial officer), and possibly Saif al-Adel (Khalid Shaikh Mohammed's successor and the commander of al Qaeda's military wing). However, some analysts believe al-Adel may have departed Iran and is now possibly located inside Iraq.<sup>19</sup>

The final threat to our national security comes from individuals and organizations labeled as non-state actors. This category includes some transnational jihadist organizations (like al Qaeda), organized crime syndicates, Narco-traffickers, and other individuals that operate outside of the framework of legitimate and sovereign states. The number of failed/failing states, particularly within South East Asia, Africa and South America, provide these non-state actors and transnational terrorist groups lucrative and fertile breeding grounds to not only recruit new members, but also to establish training bases and safe havens from which they can conduct their illicit operations.

#### Defining Success in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT)

As a result of the unprovoked attacks of 9/11, the Taliban government and members of al Qaeda felt the wrath of the United States and its coalition partners in a manner that none of them could have possibly imagined. Previous administrations responded to other deadly terrorist attacks directed against the United States in a more restrained manner. While the U.S. military response was unprecedented, the terrorists miscalculated the resolve of the American people, and the nearly unanimous global support for the war on terrorism.<sup>20</sup> They now find themselves in a war not just with the United States, but with the majority of the nations around the world. In his speech to the Joint session of Congress and the American people on 20 September 2001 President Bush stated:

Our response involves far more than instant retaliation and isolated strikes. Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have seen. It may include dramatic strikes, visible on TV, and covert operations, secret even in success.<sup>21</sup>

While there are a seemingly endless number of measures of effectiveness that could be applied to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the U.S.-led GWOT, President Bush articulated four during a major policy speech to the National Endowment for Democracy on 6 October 2005. These GWOT specific goals included: prevent the attacks of terrorist networks before they occur; deny weapons of mass destruction to outlaw regimes and terrorists; deny radical groups the support and sanctuary of outlaw regimes; and finally deny the militants control of any nation which they could then use as a home base.<sup>22</sup> This analysis for the GWOT will therefore focus on these goals in order to determine its overall effectiveness.

On the surface the anecdotal, unclassified data shows that the GWOT is having a significant impact on specifically al Qaeda, its leadership, and the organizations overall ability to operate globally. While there have been some gains against other transnational terrorist organizations these have been for the most part minor victories as the focus of the GWOT remains almost exclusively on al Qaeda. It is not possible to document all of the successes that the United States and its allies are having against these transnational jihadist organizations. However, there are still an ever increasing number of successes which have been made public since 2001 to include: references to the number of terrorist plans which have been disrupted or foiled; the disposition of the pre-September 2001 al Qaeda senior leadership; the amount of money seized by the Department of Treasury; and the number of terrorist killed or captured by our allies in their own struggle against internal, regional and transnational terrorism.

President Bush's first goal was to prevent "terrorist attacks before they occur". While it is true that there has not been a successful terrorist attack in the United States since 9/11, globally there have been more than 1,000 "significant terrorist attacks"<sup>23</sup> since 2001. A review of the open source data from the U.S. Department of State Counterterrorism Center, and the National Counterterrorism Center databases reveals

- That the number of terrorist attacks (not including those conducted inside Iraq) has dramatically increased since 2001.
- al Qaeda has actually conducted more successful significant terrorist attacks since 9/11 (15), than they did in the four years prior to 9/11(9).
- Successful terrorist attacks took place around the world.

- Each GCC had numerous incidents in their AOR since 2003 with the majority of these attacks taking place inside the USEUCOM AOR, followed by USCENTCOM, USSOUTHCOM, USPACOM then NORTHCOM<sup>24</sup>.

In a recent speech the President stated, "Overall, the United States and our partners have disrupted at least ten serious al Qaeda terrorist plots since September 11, including three plots to attack within the United States."<sup>25</sup> The number of terrorists that have been either killed or captured in the GWOT is staggering. To date, with the exception of the most senior al Qaeda leadership all of the individuals responsible for the attacks of 9/11, as well as the USS Cole attack, have been either killed or captured. It is estimated that more than two-thirds of the pre-September 2001 al Qaeda senior leaders have also either been either killed or captured including: Mohammed Atef (senior military commander), Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (9/11 operational planner), Abu Zubaydah (Khalid's replacement), Ramzi Binalshibh (9/11 manager), Riduan Isamuddin nom de guerre Hambali (SE Asia Commander), Abdul Rahim al-Nashiri (one of the senior planners of the USS Cole attack) Khaled Ali bin Hadj (al-Nashiri's replacement) and Al Para (the key al Qaeda operative in North Africa).<sup>26</sup>

In December 2003, Roger Hardy from BBC News reported, "more than 3,000 al Qaeda operatives have been seized or slain in 102 countries since September 11, 2001."<sup>27</sup> Richard Miniter reports in his book *Shadow War: The Untold Story of How America is Winning the War on Terror* that both the Department of Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service deployed numerous regulators around the world to cut off funding streams which were determined to be supporting global terror. As a result of their combined efforts, it is believed that as of early 2004, "more than \$136 million in alleged terrorist-related assets have been seized and more than 315 individuals and entities have been closed down."<sup>28</sup> It is important to note that many of these individuals or entities targeted by the Treasury Department do not have any direct ties to al Qaeda, but rather to other organizations identified as being FTOs by the DOS. Not all experts agree however, that we have been successful in stemming the flow of finances to al Qaeda and other transnational terrorist organizations. The Council on Foreign Relations believes that "while al-Qaeda's current and prospective ability to raise and move funds with impunity has been significantly diminished . . . al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations still have ready access to financial resources, and that fact constitutes an ongoing threat to the United States."<sup>29</sup> A Council on Foreign Affairs task force investigated the financing of terrorism and reported that "Saudi Arabia has not fully implemented its new laws and regulations and, as a result, opportunities for the witting or unwitting financing of terrorism persist. Moreover, there is no evidence that Saudi Arabia has taken public punitive actions against any individual for financing

terror.”<sup>30</sup> However, prior to prosecuting anyone for financing terrorism it must be determined whether these individuals were innocent victims who merely donated funds to what they believed were legitimate charities or they in fact provided money knowingly to terrorist organizations. Authorities in Saudi Arabia also claim they have killed or captured hundreds of al Qaeda terrorists. Even Yemen, the traditional home of bin Laden, is credited with having arrested scores of al Qaeda members, although many more still remain in the country.<sup>31</sup> The Philippine military continues to capture or kill key members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and Jemaah Islamiya (JI) with the support of United States military and our interagency team.

The United States continues to work diligently with a variety of international organizations in an effort to eliminate the possibility of weapons of mass destruction falling into the wrong hands. Current estimates are that more than two dozen countries are attempting to procure, or develop, weapons of mass destruction. As the President outlined in his speech on 6 October 2005, there have been many successes in our efforts to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The United States, Great Britain and Pakistan uncovered the illicit activities of A.Q. Khan and brought an end to his efforts to proliferate nuclear weapons technology, however this was not before a considerable and undetermined amount of buying and selling of this critical technology took place. In 2003, Libya assured the world through the United Nations Security Council that it had formally abandoned its chemical, nuclear, and ballistic missile programs; would agree to share intelligence on terrorist organizations; and that it would take actions to resolve matters related to the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, as well as other terrorist attacks it sanctioned.<sup>32</sup> More than a dozen shipments of suspected weapons technology, including equipment for Iran’s ballistic missile program, were confiscated through the Proliferation Security Initiative.<sup>33</sup> The United States continues to work with Russia on the 1991 Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act to reduce their stockpiles of weapons and material that could possibly be made available to terrorists. Finally, since 2001, some \$413 billion has been spent to train and equip local officials to respond to emergencies, including terror strikes.<sup>34</sup>

When it comes to addressing the goal of denying the support and sanctuary of terrorist organizations by any governments the United States continues to engage these nations in bi-Lateral as well as multi-Lateral discussions. President Bush continues to warn all nations that:

The United States makes no distinction between those who commit acts of terror and those who support and harbor them, because they’re equally as guilty of murder. Any government that chooses to be an ally of terror has also chosen to be an enemy of civilization, and the civilized world must hold these regimes to account.<sup>35</sup>

International organizations such as the European Union, and the United Nations, operate through diplomatic channels to try and resolve the ongoing crisis with Iran over its nuclear weapons program, as well as to curb its support of international terrorist organizations. For example, the preponderance of evidence seems to indicate that the attack on the Khobar towers was planned in Syria; using explosives obtained from Lebanon, and was carried out by the Saudi Hezbollah, with Iranian support being limited to sponsoring the Shia cause amongst Saudi Shia.<sup>36</sup>

In an attempt to prevent other fragile governments from possibly falling prey to terrorist organizations, the United States has been active in the establishment of numerous new alliances including “a global intelligence-sharing arrangement that now incorporates more than one hundred nations.”<sup>37</sup> While there is still much work to do in this particular area, there have also been some successes. Other programs and initiatives to help provide regional stability and security while improving the exchange of information between nations are the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI), and the Trans Saharan Counter-Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI).

PSI was a DOS funded program initially established in 2002 to provide military training and technical assistance to the governments of Mali, Niger, Chad and Mauritania in order to monitor the movement of transnational terrorists, illegal arms, and drug trafficking in the Sahel region of Northern Africa.<sup>38</sup> Despite the fact that the PSI program was seriously under-funded from its inception (only \$6.25M total), it did produce measurable results including the capture of Abderrazak al-Para, a key member of the GSPC, improve regional cooperation and information exchange among the nations participating in the initiative, and possibly most importantly it provided the Special Operations Forces from Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) an opportunity to “learn new cultures, terrain and languages by working with these African forces.”<sup>39</sup>

As a result of the successes achieved during the PSI a new initiative has been implemented. This new program, the Trans Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI), will build on the PSI and will expand the SOCEUR training from the original PSI members of Mali, Niger, Chad and Mauritania, to include military forces from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Senegal and Nigeria. The TSCTI program is better funded, scheduled to receive approximately \$100 million a year through 2010, and will focus on developing a much more comprehensive approach to regional security and stability by training African forces and encouraging these nations to work collaboratively toward confronting regional issues.<sup>40</sup> Theresa Whelan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs, stated during an interview in 2005 with the American Forces Press Service, that in addition to the DOS and DOD, the TSCTI will also

incorporate additional USG agencies to include the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) (addressing educational issues), and the Department of Treasury, which will work with the seven participating nations to improve controls over funding issues within the region.<sup>41</sup>

The final goal established by the President was to deny militants the control of any nation to use as a home base, safe haven or launching point for terrorist activities. While the anecdotal evidence in this area is compelling, and extremely positive overall, the fact remains that there are lawless regions throughout the world that still serve as safe havens and training locations for these transnational terrorist organizations. By the end of 2002, al Qaeda was assessed by some analysts to be in some degree of distress in Southeast Asia. Its major operative (Hambali) was arrested in Thailand. Its camps were destroyed, and its networks were believed to be in disarray. Al Qaeda efforts to re-establish its activities in the three southernmost Muslim-majority provinces of Thailand have all been relatively unsuccessful so far.<sup>42</sup> However, there is still a significant terrorist threat in Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines. Much of al Qaeda's institutional knowledge – contained in its training manuals and on a multitude of computer hard drives – is now safely in the possession of the United States or its GWOT allies (but unfortunately through the use of the internet it has also found its way into the hands of radical jihadists); numerous training camps have been located and destroyed; and a multitude of terrorist trainers have been either killed or captured.<sup>43</sup>

#### Ways to Prevent Regeneration of Transnational Terrorist Organizations

While the United States, and our allies in the GWOT, has been successful in locating, arresting or eliminating scores of transnational jihadists, the question remains is this going to be sufficient to win the war in the long term? According to the *9/11 Commission Report* more than two years ago Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld asked some of his key advisors in a memorandum:

Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us? Does the US need to fashion a broad, integrated plan to stop the next generation of terrorist? The US is putting relatively little effort into a long-range plan, but we are putting a great deal of effort into trying to stop terrorists. The cost-benefit ratio is against us! Our cost is billions against the terrorists' cost of millions.<sup>44</sup>

Two years after Mr. Rumsfeld asked these questions, the answers to both do not appear to have changed all that much.

Regardless of how many key leaders (including bin Laden, Zawahiri and Zarqawi), or operatives are killed or captured, the simple fact remains that until the United States and its

allies in the GWOT begin to seriously address, and resolve, the multitude of underlying issues which lead to the disenchantment of the jihadists and ultimately caused them to join these terrorist organizations, the answer to the SecDef's first question will continue to remain a resounding "No!" While there is little doubt that we have had some impact on al Qaeda's overall ability to train and conduct global terrorist attacks within the United States, they still remain the number one threat to our national security. In order to prevent the regeneration of these threats in the long run the U.S. must establish long range, comprehensive, and multi-lateral plans which encompass at a minimum: a peaceful and equitable solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; addressing the sentiment and legitimate grievances of the general populations within the greater Middle East; utilizing civic leaders, clerics and institutions such as Al-Azhar University to counter the false teachings and manipulation of Islam espoused by men like bin Laden, Zawahiri and Zarqawi; creating viable alternatives for the young and disenfranchised; creating economic and educational incentives through the establishment of new programs (such as the PSI and TSCTI) within the greater Middle East; continuing to train with the regional military and paramilitary counterterrorist units; and finally continuing to push for democracies to be established throughout the Middle East as a viable alternative to the secular governments currently in place, thereby allowing the citizens to have a greater say in their overall future. None of these recommendations are revolutionary, but as yet the majority of them have not been adequately addressed.

#### Joint Doctrinal Framework for Combatant Commands

While al Qaeda has been somewhat effective since 2001 in conducting decentralized operations without any true overarching "unity of command," it is one of the most important aspects of effectively employing our military forces, regardless of the size of that force. As defined in the *Unified Action Armed Forces* (UNAAF) unity of command places all of the "forces employed in pursuit of a common purpose" under the command and control of a single commander.<sup>45</sup> In an effort to ensure unity of command the DOD further grants the combatant commands the authority to "perform those functions of command over assigned forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations."<sup>46</sup>

The DOD has clearly defined in its doctrine the methodology for establishing joint force commands. The primary methodology used by the DOD to determine roles, missions, functions and responsibilities within the military has been the establishment of Unified Combatant Commands along geographic or functional lines, or through the use joint task forces (JTFs).

Many argue that the current GCC boundaries, delineating specific areas of responsibility are relics of the cold war and should be re-evaluated in light of the changing world environment. This is particularly true when attempting to apply the tenant "unity of effort" which is defined as the "coordination among government department and agencies."<sup>47</sup> It is difficult, if not impossible, to see how the United States could possibly achieve unity of effort when none of the other agencies within the United States Government, or international organizations, adhere to these same DOD-established boundaries. While the methodology for designating specific areas of responsibility for the combatant commanders is debatable, I believe the overall concept of unified commands still has validity for the implementation of our national military strategy.

The issue of the DOD drawn boundaries to delineate the GCC AORs remains problematic for several reasons. First, the DOD established boundaries do not "line up" with those used by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to identify their regional groupings, nor to the DOS' regional bureaus, or any groupings by International Organizations (IOs) including the United Nations (UN). This at best can make unity of effort a challenge, and at worst can nullify unity of effort. Second, the current GCC boundary often dissects traditional friction points between rival nation states, and as a result requires a minimum of two of the GCCs to deal with these potential flashpoints. For example, Israel is found within the USEUCOM AOR, while the majority of the Arab nations in conflict with Israel are in the USCENTCOM AOR. Pakistan is located within the USCENTCOM AOR, while India is within the USPACOM AOR. Third, there appears to be a lack of coordination and information sharing across the GCCs and U.S. governmental agencies. Part of this breakdown in communications and information sharing can be linked to the GCC boundaries not lining up with those established by the other agencies of the government. Another aspect could be a systemic breakdown which prevented the timely exchange of information between the various staffs of the GCCs. Finally, since many within the DOD have not read and don't clearly understand current joint doctrine, there is a common misperception that the GCC AORs are somehow sacrosanct. Joint doctrine clearly states, "The boundaries defining these AORs are not intended to delineate restrictive geographic AORs. Combatant commanders may operate forces wherever required to accomplish their missions."<sup>48</sup> Again, many within the DOD will interpret this to mean that one of the GCCs must be designated as the supported commander, but again based on joint doctrine and emerging policies from the current administration, this assumption may be false.

Since 9/11, the Bush administration has aggressively pursued transnational jihadists under the auspices of the GWOT. The past four years have seen a significant effort by the administration, particularly the SecDef, to develop and implement methods to help streamline,



and better synchronize the anti- and counter-terrorism efforts within the DOD. One particular aspect under increasing scrutiny within the DOD is the thought process behind the designation of “supported” and “supporting” commands when evaluating the possible courses of action available to the United States for dealing with transnational jihadists, or any other threat that crosses or operates across multiple GCC AOR boundaries. The *UNAAF* defines the supported commander as “the commander having primary responsibility for all aspects of a task assigned by the *Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan* or other joint operational planning authority.”<sup>49</sup> The supporting commander is further defined as “a commander who provides augmentation forces or other support to a supported commander or who develops a supporting plan.”<sup>50</sup>

Another document that needs to be reviewed in order to fully understand this concept is the *United States Code (USC), Title 10, Armed Forces*. This document provides the authorization for the DOD to establish the Unified Combatant Commands and outlines the duties and responsibilities of each of the Combatant Commands. In general, *USC Title 10* states that each of the GCCs will exercise combatant command (COCOM) over all U.S. forces (including special operations forces) operating within their geographic boundaries in order to complete any mission assigned to them by either the President or the SecDef. *USC Title 10* also defines the relationship between the supported and supporting commands. While many within the DOD believe that by law (*USC Title 10*) the GCCs are responsible for all operations within their geographic boundaries, this is not necessarily a true statement. *USC Title 10*, Chapter 6, paragraph 167, clarifies that the Commander, USSOCOM “shall exercise command of a selected special operations mission if directed to do so by the President or the Secretary of Defense.”<sup>51</sup>

The President and/or the SecDef are allowed by law (*USC Title 10*), as well as the *UNAAF*, and the *Unified Command Plan* (UCP), to deviate from the GCC AOR boundaries as necessary in order to accomplish the mission. The flexibility to rapidly change supported and supporting roles among the combatant commands is becoming increasingly more critical as we continue to try and intercept transnational terrorists who travel “from continent to continent with the ease of a vacationer or business traveler.”<sup>52</sup> In order to confront the complex challenge of the transnational movement of jihadists or terrorists, the SecDef has a variety of options for designating the supported commander for a specific operation. He could designate one of the GCCs, one of the functional combatant commands (i.e. USSOCOM), or he may establish a Joint Task Force (JTF) with a designated joint operations area (JOA). If the SecDef chooses either of the last two options, then the supported headquarters will operate within an area designated by the SecDef, regardless of the existing GCC boundaries. In order to determine

which option presents the President or the SecDef the optimal solution for combating transnational jihadists in the future, it is necessary to compare the capabilities and limitations of the four GCCs whose AORs lie outside the continental United States and USSOCOM.

#### Comparative Analysis of the Geographic Combatant Commands and USSOCOM

On the surface there appears to be little concern for any further analysis to determine the appropriate combatant command structure as the supported command for locating, tracking and eliminating transnational jihadists. Traditionalists would say our current system utilizing the GCCs is sufficient, and point to the successes we have enjoyed as a nation over the past four years of the GWOT. Why change things? While we may have been relatively successful since 9/11 in capturing or killing a significant number of low- to mid-level operatives, specifically within al Qaeda, we have had only limited success in eliminating the most senior leadership within this same organization.

Could we have been more successful in our pursuit of the senior leadership had we conducted business utilizing different supported and supporting relationships? We may never know. What is certain is that over the past few years' one combatant command, USSOCOM has been provided with a variety of labels for its particular role in the GWOT. These labels have included: the DOD lead agency, the "synchronizer" of the DOD GWOT effort,<sup>53</sup> and the supported commander for the GWOT. Amazingly there is still confusion within the DOD pertaining to USSOCOM's role in the GWOT despite what seems like countless documents (including *USC Title 10*, the *UCP* and the *UNAAF*) as well as numerous policy directives, published orders, and memoranda signed by the President and the SecDef clearly stating that USSOCOM has been designated as the supported command for the overall DOD GWOT effort. A comparison of some of the capabilities and limitations of each of the GCCs, including USSOCOM against common measures of effectiveness, will add clarification as to why USSOCOM is optimally suited to lead the United States military effort against transnational jihadists.

It is important to understand that due to the unclassified nature of this paper a full analysis and disclosure of all the capabilities and limitations of each of the GCCs, including USSOCOM, is not possible. However, there is still much that can be gleaned by looking at these organizations holistically. Evaluative measures of effectiveness include:

- Which organization possesses the capability to process and synthesize the flow of intelligence information related to these transnational terrorist organizations?

- How many trained and knowledgeable personnel can each organization dedicate to the challenge of tracking the movement of transnational jihadists worldwide?
- What significance is there to a general absence of regional experts across all of the GCCs?
- What operational duties impede an analysis or dedicated focus on the transnational jihadist threat?
- Which organization can most rapidly and effectively respond to an intelligence 'hit' resulting in the positive location of one of the transnational threats?
- Which organization possesses a standing JTF headquarters equipped with global communications packages and the ability to link back in to the national intelligence system?

The capability to process and develop usable intelligence is much more than the collection of raw information related to these terrorists on a daily basis. All of the GCCs and USSOCOM have essentially the same ability to receive operational- to national-level intelligence whether this information comes from unmanned aerial vehicles, national collection or intelligence agencies, or spaced based systems. However, there is a difference in the overall amount; quality and type of intelligence that USSOCOM is able obtain above that provided to each of the GCCs. This intelligence information is derived from sensitive sources, such as the national mission force, and other forces which are operating in clandestine environments around the world. As a result of USSOCOM's use of highly sensitive and often compartmentalized means and sources used to gather this information much of this information is not available for widespread dissemination to each of the GCCs. However, USSOCOM does not withhold critical, time sensitive information from the GCCs when it comes to specific and credible terrorist threats against U.S. or coalition forces.

Of greater importance than the volumes of intelligence that an organization is able to collect on a specific threat is what the organization is able to do with this data. The total number of personnel required to collect and process the raw intelligence information flowing into the GCCs from our national intelligence systems on a daily basis is overwhelming. As such, the chance of finding that one 'golden nugget' that leads to the exact location of a specific high value target is unlikely. The reality is that "most intelligence breakthroughs against terrorism will continue to involve the piecing together of "non-nugget-like" information from a variety of human, technical, and open sources."<sup>54</sup> That stated two key questions to be answered are:

- What analytical capability does each organization have to provide timely, accurate and targetable intelligence which can be used to interdict low dwell time, high value targets?
- How many qualified people does each combatant command have available to process this time sensitive data in order to locate, identify and track key leaders and organizations optimally prior to an operation?

One specific area which makes USSOCOM different than the other GCCs is that the command has established an organization that is mission-oriented and targeted specifically on the GWOT. The USSOCOM Center for Special Operations (SCSO) is an organization of approximately 760 personnel functionally organized by intelligence (J2), operations (J3) and strategic planning (J5) focuses. All of the personnel assigned or attached to SCSO are highly trained specialists in the areas of joint and coalition operational/strategic mission planning, employment of joint and coalition special operation forces, and interagency planning and execution specifically required to conduct the GWOT. This organization provides the Commander, USSOCOM with joint, coalition and interagency anti- and counter-terrorist experts not found in any of the GCCs. In order to work more efficiently with each of the GCCs, SCSO has also assigned its operational desks to focus on specific regions that coincide with those of the GCC AORs. While there are specific desk officers focused along established GCC boundaries, USSOCOM is a “Global Command”<sup>55</sup> focused on synchronizing the DOD effort to locate, track and target transnational jihadists, and terrorist organizations regardless of their location or movements.

In addition to SCSO not being encumbered by geographic boundaries they also do not have to deal with the other distractions or operations which the GCCs have to cope with on a daily basis. As a result SCSO is able to focus all of its energy and resources on developing and implementing a global strategy for the GWOT. The intelligence personnel assigned and attached to SCSO work on a daily basis with interagency intelligence personnel collocated with USSOCOM as well as collaboratively to develop and synthesize the intelligence picture used by the Intelligence Support Group (ISG) (J2) within SCSO. All of the intelligence derived from the SCSO is provided to the deployed special operations forces, as well as to the SCSO Campaign Support Group (CSG) (J5). The CSG is also a functionally aligned organization that is leading the planning and synchronization efforts of the overall GWOT effort within the DOD. In summation, while each of the GCCs are focused primarily on actions within their specific AOR, and to a lesser degree to those countries immediately adjacent to their AOR, USSOCOM maintains a global perspective on the GWOT by monitoring and processing information from

across the GCCs as well other U.S. agencies, and coalition nations which ultimately results in time sensitive, targetable data.

Many will argue that in order to optimize our efforts in the pursuit of transnational terrorist organizations we need to utilize the regional experts found within each of the GCCs. No one can argue the value of having regional experts in order to try and solve the numerous and complex problems facing the GCCs. In fact, the expertise these individuals possess often proves to be invaluable for the war fighting commanders. The challenge becomes defining what skill sets a true regional expert must possess. If an individual is to be viewed as a true "Middle East expert" they must be able to speak and read Arabic fluently, have traveled extensively within the region, and demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the culture, religions, and politics within the region. When using these screening criteria to determine who is, and who is not, a true regional expert it is obvious that there is a critical shortage of these personnel across the DOD, including the GCCs.

As Dr. Sherifa Zuhur accurately points out in her monograph, *A Hundred Osama: Islamist Threats and the Future of Counterinsurgency*, the United States has failed to properly resource these critical analysts for a variety of reasons. The most critical of these is that current analysts possess a "lack of experience in the region" hence they "do not understand the worldviews shaping actors and individuals they study."<sup>56</sup> As Dr. Zuhur points out other systemic problems within DOS and other governmental agencies include archaic personnel management systems which continue to relocate career professional analysts not because of their specific skill sets, but rather because of their tenure in the organizations. The complexity of the Arabic language with its regional and historical dialects requires years of intensive training while our current programs dedicate only "1-2 years" which is inadequate.<sup>57</sup> Finally, the true "native speakers" who could provide tremendous insight into the thought processes of the leaders of these transnational organizations are hired as contractors rather than analysts because these individuals rarely possess the required security clearances to operate within the GCC headquarters.<sup>58</sup>

All of the organizations realize how critical these experts are to the overall success of the GWOT effort, but the reality is that individuals who possess the necessary skills and requisite security clearances are also few and far between within the DOD. While hiring true regional experts continues to be a priority for all of the GCCs and USSOCOM, interim additional approaches must be explored and utilized to fill this information gap. In an effort to work through these challenges, USSOCOM actively engages our coalition partners in the GWOT in order to develop regional anti- and counter-terrorism expertise. The most recent counter-

terrorism workshop hosted by USSOCOM was conducted in October 2005 and was attended by representatives from more than 50 nations participating in the GWOT. During this conference USSOCOM announced a new initiative, the Global Rewards Information Program (GRIP).

According to Stan Schrager, the USSOCOM public diplomacy advisor, GRIP would function "like a global version of the television show 'America's Most Wanted.' Working closely with the FBI, the show's producers pass information to the public through the mass media about the criminals in the hope the public will respond with information on their whereabouts."<sup>59</sup> Through the use of programs such as GRIPs, other regional military training events with coalition anti-and counter-terrorism units, collaborative tools, as well as linking up with the true regional expertise from across the United States, USSOCOM is able to gain critical insight into the majority of complex situations which require acute cultural awareness and specific regional perspective. Unlike the GCCs which focus their efforts almost exclusively on the countries within their specific AOR, USSOCOM has a robust staff of senior military personnel from across the joint force, along with representatives from other key U.S. Governmental agencies, representation from key allies in the GWOT; as well as numerous other DOD civilians, and contractors that maintain a global focus.

Americans are becoming painfully aware that, in order to win the GWOT, a commitment very similar to that required in staring down the Soviet Union during the Cold war will be required. This war will also be radically different as a result of the ever increasing number of casualties that will be required to see this noble effort through to its successful conclusion. Currently the preponderance of the military forces within the United States, as well as many of our key allies remain decisively engaged in on-going operations in the USCENTCOM AOR. No one doubts that our military and national commitments to Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) will be measured in terms of years, if not decades. The fact is these operations, as well as the seemingly countless others around the world requiring the commitment of our military forces, all detract from the ability of each of the combatant commanders to dedicate all their assigned resources to fight the transnational jihadists and terrorist networks within their AORs.

A quick review of the responsibilities and on-going missions within the GCCs reveal the scope of this challenge. These are all in addition to the GCCs theater security cooperation programs.

USCENTCOM:

- Is decisively engaged in both Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.
- Is engaged in the Horn of Africa.

USPACOM:

- Continues to provide conventional forces (i.e. the 25th Infantry Division) to support USCENTCOM.
- Provides special operations and intelligence support to the Philippine government in support of Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P).
- Addresses other existing or emerging threats to the Pacific Rim nations in the GWOT.
- Is attempting to defuse an emerging nuclear threat in North Korea.
- Continues to try and decipher the intentions of the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) in the region.

USEUCOM:

- Is providing conventional forces to support USCENTCOM operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Is simultaneously dealing with emerging threats and humanitarian crises in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Is conducting on going stabilization operations in the Balkans.
- Is coping with the issues related to expanding NATO to Eastern Europe.
- Remains engaged in trying to resolve the complex issues involving Israel and Cyprus.

USSOUTHCOM:

- Continues to operate as an economy of force in the always volatile Central and South American countries rife with fragile democracies, corruption, organized crime, PRC expansionism, narco-traffickers, and emerging terrorist organizations .

USSOCOM:

- The majority of their deployed forces are currently operating within the USCENTCOM AOR.

- Maintains a significant presence and operational capability within each of the GCC AORs, as well as additional capability located within the Continental United States (CONUS).

One of the biggest challenges when dealing with the transnational jihadist threat is that, over time, al Qaeda and other transnational terrorist organizations are becoming increasingly more “secretive, cellular, dispersed, and decentralized.”<sup>60</sup> As a result they are not as susceptible to conventional military attack or elimination since they are often sensitive targets which present relatively low dwell times. The ability to move rapidly and decisively when targetable data presents itself will be vital to our overall success, particularly when trying to locate and engage the more senior leadership of these organizations. By its design, forces assigned to USSOCOM are rapidly deployable, highly lethal, and since many of the vehicles and transportation assets utilized by these forces are non-standard they are able to maintain a lower visibility in foreign countries than the traditional military vehicles operated by the conventional forces. These special operations units also have access to the highly sensitive, often compartmentalized, intelligence information needed to close with and engage these types of enemy. However, as we look at the threat the decision must be made quickly and decisively as to whether a special operations force, conventional force, or global strike asset is the optimum choice based on the low dwell time of some of these targets, and political implications of conducting military operations inside a sovereign nation with or without their tacit support. Again, while each of the GCCs maintains a regional focus on friendly assets operating within or immediately adjacent to their AOR, USSOCOM is tracking intelligence and friendly force asset availability on a global perspective. USSOCOM maintains global situational awareness by continuously monitoring the location of all friendly conventional and SOF forces through the use of blue force tracking (BFT) conducting combat operations, and by monitoring overall asset availability of friendly forces not only deployed into each of the GCC AORs, but also those forces still within the continental United States that are available for tasking. All of this information is incorporated on a frequent basis into the strategic planning and targeting process used during time sensitive planning events with the outcome being a timely, fully-informed decision by the Commander, USSOCOM as to which asset (conventional, special purpose, or strategic) is in the best position to take the decisive action against the target.

Secretary Rumsfeld directed each of the combatant commands to establish a standing joint force headquarters core element (SJFHQ-CE). These organizations, established by U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM), are designed to augment the existing combatant command staff, provide a regional focus, maintain situational awareness and a general



understanding of the overall operational environment, and finally to provide the additional knowledge and capabilities required to conduct effects based planning and operations. USPACOM was the first of the combatant commands to comply with the Secretary of Defense's guidance and their SJFHQ is integrated into their organization and has been functional for some time. USEUCOM has also embraced the SJFHQ concept and has since incorporated this capability within its USEUCOM Plans and Operations Center (EPOC). USSOUTHCOM is still in the process of training with USJFCOM, and to date, has not activated this organization. Finally, due to ongoing operations OEF/OIF USCENTCOM was allowed to defer the implementation of this SecDef directive until some time in the future. USSOCOM took the same guidance and established the capabilities as directed by the SecDef. However, in addition to establishing this organization within the SCSO, the Commander, USSOCOM greatly expanded the scope and capabilities of this organization. In an effort to provide the supported commander (as designated by the SecDef) the optimal special operations subject matter expertise USSOCOM has developed, resourced and trained a rapidly deployable, modular and scaleable organization. This organization is designed to conduct a variety of missions from augmenting an existing combatant command staff with a small number of planners and operators trained to employ special purpose forces, up to and including a fully functional standing joint task force headquarters that requires only minimal augmentation to conduct sustained operations anywhere in the world. These modular packages are also equipped with a full suite of communications, computers and intelligence capabilities allowing it to maintain connectivity around the globe, as well as palletized life support and sustainment packages.

A review of the screening criteria shows that while each of the GCCs has some inherent capability to locate, track and engage more localized and possibly regional terrorist threats, the only combatant command that has the ability to fully synchronize and execute these operations across multiple GCC boundaries is USSOCOM.

#### Recommendations

*The United States National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, published in February 2003, served us well during the initial stages of the GWOT. The United States continues to see a great deal of success in our efforts to destroy transnational terrorist organizations. That stated, the document is in need of key revisions to the nature and description of the threat, and the overall goals and objectives of the strategy.

The current document defines the threat in terms of how we used to understand terrorist networks and how they function. However, the *9/11 Commission Report* states:

Our enemy is two fold: al Qaeda, a stateless network of terrorists that struck us on 9/11; and a radical ideological movement in the Islamic world, inspired in part by al Qaeda, which spawned terrorist groups and violence across the globe. The first enemy is weakened, but continues to pose a grave threat. The second enemy is gathering, and will menace Americans and American interests long after Osama bin Laden and his cohorts are killed or captured. Thus our strategy must match our means to two ends: dismantling the al Qaeda network and prevailing in the longer term over the ideology that gives rise to Islamist terrorism.<sup>61</sup>

Over the past four years we have seen al Qaeda and other transnational terrorist organizations suffer significant and seemingly irreplaceable losses to its key leadership and operatives, its financial networks, training bases and safe havens, equipment and computer databases yet continue to operate. It should be noted that one of the problems with the 9/11 Commission description above is that it does not accurately address how these transnational terrorist organizations have evolved over time. As Al-Zayyat said in a 1999 interview “the fundamentalist movement’s leaders are ideas, a heritage, a stature, and principles that do not disappear when they disappear.”<sup>62</sup>

To keep pace with this rapidly changing threat our national strategy for locating, tracking, neutralizing or destroying these organizations must also continue to improve. Currently the United States and many of our allies operate within arbitrary boundaries established for our GCCs. While these lines on a map help to delineate specific areas of responsibility, transnational terrorists are equally aware of these artificial boundaries and often use them to their advantage to operate more easily by routinely crossing from one AOR to another along the seams. The DOD may have made the first steps in addressing this issue by designating USSOCOM as the “global synchronizer in the war on terrorism for all the military commands.”<sup>63</sup>

Next, our national strategy for combating terrorism needs to be expanded to address two key and interrelated issues: how to prevent the regeneration of terrorist organizations, and how to reduce the underlying conditions that push individuals to join terrorist organizations in the first place. As John Esposito correctly points out in his book *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam*:

Belief that overwhelming force has brought a quick victory and proven an effective answer and message to other terrorist or potential terrorists also overlooks real and future threats. Other bin Ladens exist as do the political and economic conditions that they can exploit to recruit new soldiers for their unholy wars.<sup>64</sup>

There is little doubt that transnational terrorist organizations have been severely affected by the GWOT, but the United States and its allies cannot afford to rest. It is imperative that the

United States and the international community work with the Muslim nations to prevent the regeneration of these terrorist organizations while still engaging new and emerging threats. In order to do this the United States and its allies must address the underlying grievances of the Muslim majority. John Esposito states there are many factors which complicate the problem of addressing the regeneration of Islamic radicalism and that include:

widespread feelings of failure and loss of identity in many Muslim societies, as well as failed political systems and economies. Overcrowded cities with insufficient social support systems, high unemployment rates, government corruption, a growing gap between rich and poor, and the breakdown of traditional religious and social values plagued many nations.<sup>65</sup>

Others believe that in addition to the issues listed above the United States needs to review its overall foreign policy for the Middle East and exert “systemic pressure on Arab and Muslim ruling allies to structurally reform and integrate the rising social classes into the political space.”<sup>66</sup> It is true that some of the grievances expressed by disgruntled individuals in the Middle East are valid and should be reviewed by the policy makers within this country. However, the majority of these issues are truly Muslim and Arab issues to resolve.

More than four years after al Qaeda carried out its deadly attacks on the United States we remain a “nation at war.” By all accounts we are making steady progress towards winning the GWOT. Slowly, but surely, we are making our nation and the world a safer place to be. Along the way our nation has made several course corrections in an attempt to neutralize or destroy terrorist groups with global reach. Some of the diversions were helpful while others produced little, if any, result.

This analysis shows that while each of the GCCs have some inherent capability to locate, track and engage localized and regional terrorist threats, the only combatant command with the ability to fully synchronize, and execute, these operations across multiple GCC boundaries is USSOCOM. The 9/11 Commission Report also provided a recommendation very similar to this when they stated the “lead responsibility for directing and executing paramilitary operations, whether clandestine or covert, should shift to the Department of Defense. There it should be consolidated with the capabilities for training, directions, and execution of such operations already being developed in the Special Operations Command.”<sup>67</sup>

Middle East experts such as Fawaz Gerges and Rohan Gunaratna believe that the actions of bin Laden and other extremists are losing them the support of the majority of the Muslim population. Gerges optimistically said, “bin Laden and his associates have lost the war for Muslim minds. Muslim public opinion has become more vocal in its condemnation of al Qaeda’s...ideology of hate.”<sup>68</sup> Gunaratna said, “Terrorism is supported by less than one

percent of the Muslim population. But to target the terrorists support, you need the total support of the Muslim population."<sup>69</sup> Whether al Qaeda and organizations like it have in fact lost the battle for the Muslim hearts and minds remains to be seen. One thing that is certain: to truly eliminate transnational terrorist organizations and the underlying conditions that feed the beast today is going to take a concerted effort by the United States, the Muslim world, and the international community over the upcoming decades. Until that time comes, the United States should continue to measure its effectiveness in the GWOT by using President Bush's four GWOT goals; modifying its *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* to reflect the emerging nature and description of the transnational terrorist threat as well as updating the goals and objectives of this strategy; and fully endorsing and utilizing USSOCOM as the supported command for the war against transnational terrorist threats.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> John L. Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 22. Osama bin Laden believed that the Muslim as a whole had suffered humiliation and oppression at the hands of the Western nations for more than 80 years. While bin Laden believed the United States and its ally's were to blame for the plight of the Muslim people he directed the majority of his ire towards the United States and Saudi Arabian governments. As a result of these feelings bin Laden had long sought an opportunity to exact revenge by attacking Western nations particularly the United States for actions in Iraq, Bosnia, Chechnya, Palestine and Kashmir.

<sup>2</sup> National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *9/11 Commission Report*, (New York, NY, Barnes and Noble, 2004), 154. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (KSM) was born in Pakistan. He joined the Muslim Brotherhood at the age of 16. KSM attended college in North Carolina where he graduated in 1986 with a degree in mechanical engineering. His anti-American feelings were not the product of his time spent in the United States attending school, but rather at the U. S. Government's foreign policy related to Israel. In addition to the 9/11 attacks KSM has also been linked to the following plots: The first attack on the World Trade Center by Ramzi Yousef (nephew to KSM in 1993), a plot to assassinate President Clinton during a trip to Manila, Philippines in Nov 94), the Bali nightclub bombing (killed 202, injured 209 on 12 Oct 02), the failed attack on American Airline Flight #63 (Richard Reid and the shoe bombing plot), and the murder of Daniel Pearl (Wall Street Journal journalist murdered in Karachi, Pakistan in Jan 02). KSM was arrested in Rawalpindi, Pakistan on 1 March 2003 and is now under U.S. control.

<sup>3</sup> Hilaire Belloc, *The Great Heresies* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishing, Inc, 1991) 73-76; quoted by Michael Scheuer, *Through Our Enemies Eyes: Osama bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, Inc., 2006), xvi.

<sup>4</sup> The five Geographic Combatant Commands are: U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM); U.S. European Command (USEUCOM); U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM); U.S. Southern

Command (USSOUTHCOM); and U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). Since this paper assumes that the President or the Secretary of defense have directed a military option outside of the continental United States USNORTHCOM will not be addressed.

<sup>5</sup> George W. Bush, "Freedom at War with Fear", address to a joint session of congress and the American people 25 September, 2001, available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>; Internet; accessed 25 February 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, September 2005), 162. Gerges is stressing the fundamental flaw in using the terms jihadist and al Qaeda interchangeably.

<sup>7</sup> United States Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003*, available from <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/fs/37191.htm>, internet accessed 28 November 2005.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, Foreign Terrorist Organization Fact Sheet.

<sup>9</sup> Esposito, 21. Osama bin Laden issued this statement in a fatwa in 1998. Despite the fact that this practice violates the Muslim faith, which states that only religious leaders can issue fatwa's, bin Laden and Zawahiri have issued numerous fatwa's calling for the attack of the United States and its allies.

<sup>10</sup> Gerges , 39.

<sup>11</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, "Al Qaeda: Afghanistan, Islamists," available from <http://cfrterrorism.org/groups/alqaeda.html>; internet; accessed 4 February 2006. al-Qaida Fi Bilad al-Rifudayn superseded Jama'at al-Tawhid Wal Jihad) as an associate of al Qaeda in Iraq under the control of Musab al-Zarqawi.

<sup>12</sup> George W. Bush, "State of the Union Address", 29 January, 2002; available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>, internet accessed 29 November 2005.

<sup>13</sup> United States Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002*, available from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/20117.pdf>, internet accessed 28 November 2005.

<sup>14</sup> United States Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003*, 76.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 77.

<sup>17</sup> *Al Jazeera*, "Ahmadinejad Joins Anti-Israeli Rallies", 28 October 2005; available from [http://www.aljazeera.com/me.asp?service\\_ID=9958](http://www.aljazeera.com/me.asp?service_ID=9958); internet; accessed 4 February 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Windrem , "Al-Qaeda Finds Safe Haven in Iran", 24 June 2005, available from <http://msnbc.com/id/8330976/from/RL.1/>, internet; accessed 4 February 2006.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 62. John Esposito went on to clarify his assertion by further clarifying that while most of those killed on 11 September 2001 were Americans, it is also true that more than half of the nations of the world also had civilians killed during the attacks in New York City, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania.

<sup>21</sup> George W. Bush, "Freedom at war With Fear", 20 September 2001, available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>, internet accessed 29 November 2005.

<sup>22</sup> George W. Bush, "Speech to the National Endowment for Democracy", 6 October 2005, available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/10/20051006-3.html>, internet accessed 29 November 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Defined by the U.S. Government's Incident Review Panel as being "if it results in loss of life or serious injury to persons, major property damage (more than \$10,000), and/or is an act or attempt that could reasonably be expected to create the conditions noted. Derived from definitions provided by the National Counter Terrorism Center.

<sup>24</sup> United States Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003*, 76.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. According to a White House Press release on 7 October 2005, The 10 plots that have been foiled are: 1) Mid-2002 the West Coast Airliner plot to attack using hijacked airplanes targets along the west coast of the United States. 2) Mid-2003 the east coast airliner plot to attack using hijacked airplanes additional targets along the east coast of the United States. 3) In 2002, The Jose Padilla plot to blow up apartment buildings in the United States and possibly detonate a "Dirty Bomb." 4) Mid-2004, the United Kingdom Urban targets plot to destroy numerous targets within the UK using conventional explosives. 5) In the spring of 2003, a plot to attack westerners in Karachi, Pakistan. 6) In 2003, Heathrow Airport Plot to attack the airport using hijacked airplanes. 7) Spring 2004 plot to conduct large scaling bombings within the United Kingdom. 8) In 2002, al Qaeda planned to attack and sink ships operating in the Arabian Gulf. 9) In 2002, a plot to destroy ships in the Straits of Hormuz. 10) In 2003 a plot to attack a tourist site outside of the United States. In addition to these 10 plots the Washington Post states that there were an additional five casings by transnational terrorists that were detected and prevented including: 1) 2003-2004 U.S. government and tourist targets within the United States, 2) 2003, gasoline filling stations within the United States, 3) In 2003, Iyman Faris was arrested while exploring options on how to destroy the Brooklyn Bridge. 4) In 2001 al Qaeda attempted to infiltrate an individual to assist in the 9/11 attacks. This individual was arrested by law enforcement officials. 5) In 2003 al Qaeda sent an individual to selected populated areas within the United States.

<sup>26</sup> Miniter, 126.

<sup>27</sup> Roger Hardy, "Analysis: 'Hard Slog' against al Qaeda," BBC News December 24, 2003, quoted in Richard Miniter, *Shadow War: The Untold Story of How America is Winning the War on Terror*. (Washington D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc, 2005), 9.

<sup>28</sup> Miniter, 162.

<sup>29</sup> Maurice Greenberg, The Council on Foreign Relations, "Update on the Global Campaign Against Terrorist Financing", June 2004, available from <http://www.cfr.org/publication/7111/>

update\_on\_the\_global\_campaign\_against\_terrorist\_financing.html?breadcrumb=default,  
internet accessed 7 February 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 164.

<sup>32</sup> United States Department of State, "Overview of State-Sponsored Terrorism", available from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/31944.pdf>, internet, accessed 3 February 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Bush, Speech to the National Endowment for Democracy.

<sup>34</sup> Minitier, 163.

<sup>35</sup> Bush, Speech to the National Endowment for Democracy.

<sup>36</sup> Gerges, 55.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Office of Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, "Pan Sahel Initiative," available from <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/14987.htm>, internet, accessed 30 January 2006.

<sup>39</sup> Global Security Organization, "Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI)", available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/pan-sahel.htm>, internet, accessed 30 January 2006

<sup>40</sup> U.S. Department of State, International Information Programs, "New Counterterrorism Initiative to Focus on Saharan Africa", available from <http://www.iwar.org.uk/news-archive/2005/05-17-2.htm>, internet, accessed 7 February 2006.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Minitier, 89.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 162.

<sup>44</sup> 9/11 Commission Report, DOD memo, Rumsfeld to Myers (p563), 374.

<sup>45</sup> Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF) JP 0-2, 10 July 2001, III-1.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, III-3-4.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, vii.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, V-1.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, GL-11.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> United States Code (USC), Title 10 Armed Forces, available from [http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode10/usc\\_sec\\_10\\_00000167----000-.html](http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode10/usc_sec_10_00000167----000-.html), internet; accessed 7 February 2006.

<sup>52</sup> George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, February 2003, 7, available from [http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/counter\\_terrorism/counter\\_terrorism\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/counter_terrorism/counter_terrorism_strategy.pdf), internet; accessed 7 February 2006

<sup>53</sup> Linda Robinson, "Special Report: Plan of Attack: The Pentagon Has a Secret Strategy For Taking on Terrorists- and Taking Them Down," *U.S. News and World Report*, 1 August 2005, 28.

<sup>54</sup> *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of Grand Strategy* (128)

<sup>55</sup> GEN Doug Brown, Commander, USSOCOM in an interview with Linda Robinson, "Plan of Attack", *U.S. News and World Report*, 1 August 2005, 32.

<sup>56</sup> Sherifa Zuhur, *A Hundred Osama: Islamist Threats and The Future of Counterinsurgency*, (Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA, December 2005), 16. Dr. Zuhur is a visiting professor of National Security Affairs to the Strategic Studies Institute. Dr. Zuhur is widely recognized as a Middle East expert with numerous degrees in Islamic studies and history.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>59</sup> Technical Sergeant Jim Moser, "Counterterrorism Workshop Build Ties", *Tip of the Spear* (November 2005), 6.

<sup>60</sup> Jeffrey Record, "Bounding the Global war on Terrorism" (Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA, December 2005), 3. Dr. record is a professor in the Department of Strategy and International Security at the U.S. Air Force War College.

<sup>61</sup> National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *9/11 Commission Report*, (New York, NY, Barnes and Noble, 2004), 362-3.

<sup>62</sup> Michael Scheuer, *Through Our Enemies Eyes: Osama bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America* (Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books, Inc., 2006), xxiii.

<sup>63</sup> Linda Robinson, "Plan of Attack," *U.S. News and World Report*, 1 August 2005, 28.

<sup>64</sup> Esposito, 153.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 83.

<sup>66</sup> Gerges, 276.

<sup>67</sup> *9/11 Commission Report*, 415.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 275.



<sup>69</sup> Moser, 7.